THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) 37,223 villages in the country are connected by telephones as on 30-9-88.

(b) 42,465 villages are likely to be connected by the telephones by the end of Seventh Five Year Plan.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) At present the Department plans to provide telecom. facility on fully subsidised basis within about 5 kms. of every inhabited place. To achieve this target about 22,400 more identified villages need to be provided with Telecom facility. Abount 5,400 villages will be provided with telecom. facility during the remaining two years of the Seventh Plan. About 16,500 villages will be covered during the early part of the Eighth Plan and rest will be covered progressively.

Creation of National Power Grid

1354. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to create a National Power Grid; and

(b) if so, by when the National Power Grid will be created and start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) and (b) The continued augmentation of Extra High Voltage lines in the Central Sector and creation/strengthening of Inte-State and Inter-Regional transmission links, and the load despatch facilities, have provided impetus for creation of a National Power Grid. The possibility of ultimately having to create a separate organisation at the National level to design, construct, maintain and operate the Extra High Voltage lines for transmission of Power from one State/Region to another, cannot be ruled out. The matter, however, requiries an in-depth study of all aspects of the problem, including set up of the proposed organisation and is receiving urgent attention of Government.

Shifting of telephones of Journalist Members

1355. SHRI NARESH C. PUGLIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, Delhi has received any representation from the Samachar Cooperative Group Housing, Society, Mayur Vihar Extension, Phase-II for providing facilities to shift telephones of Journalist Members;

(b) if so, what action has so far been taken by Government thereon and by when Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited will complete this work; and

(c) whether Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited has reduced the prices of newly introduced push button telephones, if so, what are the reasons therefor

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A cable network meeting demand from different subscribers in this area has already been planned and the work has been taken up. Telephone connections are likely to be provided progressively during 1989-90.

(c) The one time charge leviable for provision of push buton telephones has been reduced from Rs. 500 to Rs. 100 w.e.f. 1-10-88 by the Dep-